

**Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) Assessment Directions
EAARS Meeting
May 20, 2005**

1. The KBE has directed the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to improve the Kentucky Core Content for Assessment.

At the Board's direction, KDE staff has undergone a thorough process of improving the Core Content for Assessment - to make it clearer and more focused, to provide additional cognitive clarity, and to align it with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the American Diploma Project (ADP), the ACT, and other national work. The revised Core Content will serve as the basis for the new test design.

2. The KBE will expand the purpose of CATS beyond school accountability to include additional student-based measures.

The KBE supports a new test design that will be based on a number of common items taken by all students that will be scored and released to schools, supplemented by matrix items that are necessary to assure content coverage, to equate the test across forms and for pre-testing purposes. The common items could be used to provide instructional information to teachers that could be compared across all students in their class and that could be used as determined appropriate by local school districts to measure student accountability.

3. The KBE approves moving from 100% per year Core Content coverage to a model that would allow more flexibility (a. 100%-85% or b. one or two years).

The Board is willing to look at less than 100% coverage of core content in a single year but would not likely approve a model that allowed for less than 80 – 85% coverage. The Board wishes to ensure that teachers are provided with clear and sufficient information about what is "fair game" for the assessment so that they do not feel they must guess what to teach.

4. The KBE prefers that the KCCT test design include a core of common items to provide additional student level results and matrix items for coverage of core content, equating and pretesting.

The Board is committed to the concept of inclusion of both common and matrix items. The Board also strongly recommends that staff carefully consider the numbers of common and matrix open response and multiple-choice items to assure KDE has achieved the minimum amount of testing time necessary to assure valid and reliable assessment of students and to achieve the goals and priorities of the KBE. To this end, the Board has directed staff to maximize the use of multiple-choice items to assess higher order thinking skills.

5. The KBE wishes to continue their emphasis on higher order thinking skills, but adjust the weighting structure to allow for greater weight to be given to multiple-choice items, given their greater relative numbers on the assessment than in the past.

As the number of open response questions on the assessment decreases, the Board understands that it is less likely that the NTAPAA will support the current weighting of 67% for the open response and 33% for the multiple choice items. Thus, the Board expresses a preference for a

50% – 50% weighting for open response and multiple-choice items, understanding that the level of difficulty of the multiple-choice items and their use to assess higher-order thinking skills will increase.

6. If possible, the KBE wishes the state to pursue embedding a NRT within the KCCT for a longitudinal measure in Reading and Mathematics.

The Board understands that Kentucky's participation in the National Governor's Association's Center for Best Practices *Honor States Grant Program* may in the future allow for the fourteen (14) states involved to work together to provide different mechanisms for norming. The Board is willing to look at different options for providing the NRT component and is supportive of bidding the NRT both as a separate, stand alone process and an embedded process to see the time, cost and processes required for each option.

7. The KBE wishes staff to initiate pilot studies to develop and/or identify assessment approaches in Arts and Humanities and Practical Living/Vocational Studies that will address what students do as well as what they know in these areas.

The Board supports bidding both a new means to assess these areas as well as including a process to bid on the old means of assessing these areas in the event that bid proposals for a new type of assessment are time or cost-prohibitive. The Board wishes to maintain the current weight of these assessments in the overall accountability, but is willing to consider a new means for assessing that collects different information and measures performance in a different way. The Board wishes to assure that any new means of assessment is clearly focused on relevance and would prefer, if possible, that it provide some time relief to schools and students.

8. The KBE wishes staff to include in the RFP a predictive measure of college success.

The Board supports the provision of a predictive measure of college success. The results of predictive assessments would be used to guide student course taking and to target areas for accelerated or specialized work by students.

9. The KBE will consider a change to the number of on-demand writing prompts or how we assess on-demand writing.

The Board would consider a change in the number and format of on-demand prompts, but would not be willing to increase the amount of time on the test attributed to on-demand writing to greater than the currently allotted ninety minutes. As NTAPAA indicated that more than a single prompt would be necessary to maintain validity and reliability, the Board prefers the use of a single long prompt and one or two shorter prompts. The Board prefers that students be given as much choice as possible (possibly three prompt choices) for the long prompt and that at the high school level the long prompt focus on analysis. A variety of formats may be explored for the shorter prompts.

10. The KBE has directed staff to make improvements in the Writing Portfolio process.

The improvements will include fewer student entries in the portfolio; a change from an holistic to an analytical scoring measure to provide more specific feedback to students and teachers; alignment at the high school level with expectations of higher education; more specific and increased professional development for teachers; revisions to statewide regulations; and dissemination of specific guidelines for portfolio administration to reduce the amount of inappropriate assessment practices relative to the portfolio.